

# **Illinois Early Learning Council Access Committee Meeting Minutes**

**May 22, 2019 • 11am-1pm**

**Toll-Free Dial-in Number: 1-866-802-6672**

**Participant Passcode: 247- 437**

## **Welcome and Introductions**

- Attendees: Carmen Garcia, Carie Bires, Marquinta Thomas, Maria Whelan, Estefania Hernandez, Teresa Ramos, Tola Alao, Lannon Broughton, Yeny Duran, Tracy Occomy Crowder, Kim Marshall, Kayla Goldfarb, Paula Corrigan Halpern, Stephanie Polacheck, Jordan Morris, Suzi Kollmann, Donna Emmons, Stephen Vick, Vicki Hodges, Chris Tokarski, Monica Ochoa, Georgia Lane, Tracy Carls, Rose Malloy, Cornelia Grumman
- Minutes from 3/20 Meeting Approved – All in favor

## **Family Engagement Implementation Workgroup**

- Tracy reviewed the work of the FEI Subcommittee over past last year
- A small workgroup meeting will be scheduled in June to align the FAC proposal with the goals and framework of the family engagement activity within the PDG B-5 grant
  - Workgroup will consist of the access committee and subcommittee chairs, several parent representatives selected by the Access Committee co-chairs, and representatives from OECD
- Teresa Ramos raised a question about the value of having a separate family advisory group separate from the other policymaking committees rather than parent representatives embedded within each of the ELC committees.
  - Consensus: This is definitely a good point worth further consideration as the process moves forward within the context of the PDG grant

## **Early Childhood Construction Grant Ad Hoc Committee Update**

- Carmen provided an update on the work of the ad hoc committee and gave an overview of some highlights from their meeting last week
- In anticipation of the passage of a new capital bill, the group has been tasked with providing recommendations for the grant to best meet the capital needs of early child facilities around the state.
- The ad hoc committee has been reviewing data from the previous capital grant around 2010, as well as looking at more recent information, in order to try to determine areas of need throughout the state for early childhood facilities

- Also reached out to previous capital grant recipients to get more information from grantees perspectives on lessons learned and what can be improved upon this time
- The group is scheduled to hold one final meeting in mid-June, at which point they will have drafted recommendations to be considered and reviewed by the Access Committee and the ELC
- The currently pending capital bill includes \$100 million for early childhood facilities with \$11 million local match
  - Advocates initially had been asking for a \$250 million set-aside for early childhood

### **All Families Served Update**

- Implementing Priority Populations recommendations
  - Carie updated the group on AFS's outreach to various other ELC committees and subcommittees in order to implement the priority populations recommendations
  - Carie, Marquinta, and Matt recently met with the co-chairs of the Community Systems Development subcommittee, the Data Research and Evaluation subcommittee, and the Quality Committee in order to map out how to incorporate this week into our respective workplans
- Updating homelessness policy memo
  - Carie reported that the group was tabling this memo for now
- Carie reported on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) recently proposed rule, which would deny housing assistance eligibility to families with mixed immigration status and cause thousands of children and families to potentially lose their homes
  - Estimates indicate 55,000 children who are in the country legally would lose their homes nationwide if this rule were to be implemented
  - AFS has a standing agenda item to monitor policy developments impacting children and families of mixed immigration status, and will be keeping an eye on this proposed rule should it move forward
  - Matt will circulate some additional resources with more information
- Another recently proposed rule, this one by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), would change the way the federal poverty level is adjusted over time for inflation.
  - While it sounds somewhat technical and inconsequential, this would mean that the poverty level would increase much more slowly over time, limiting access to critical human service programs (child care, SNAP, Medicaid, etc.) for thousands of people and raising the bar for who is considered poor in this country
- Maria provided an example highlighting the need to increase the availability of quality care for children and families from various priority populations.
  - This ultimate goal of this committee and by implementing the priority populations recommendations in coordination with the Quality Committee to

expand access to high quality care for those facing extremely difficult circumstances and barriers

### **Intact Families Policy Discussion**

- Marquinta updated the group on how HB4885 has been implemented by DHS and DCFS to date, including:
  - How intact family case workers were connecting families to child care programs
  - How cases and payments were being transferred to DHS
- DCFS is in the process of approving a referral form for intact case workers to use to refer families to CCAP
  - This form must be completed 6 weeks prior to the intact family case's closing and submitted to the local CCR&R
  - In addition to this transfer form, a CCAP application must also be completed
  - A list of CCR&R liaisons has been circulated throughout DCFS so case workers know who to contact to process the transfer
- The goal of today's discussion is to hear from other CCR&Rs about how this process is actually playing out throughout the state
  - Kim Marshall (SDA 9 - Bloomington/Normal) explained that they haven't received any policy and procedures updates for what to expect and what to do when receiving transfer forms from DCFS case workers
    - She talked to intact family case worker in Cook County who had a case that had been closed and the family had moved to Normal, but the CCR&R didn't have the referral form submitted
    - Also has had a conversation with an intact family case worker in the local DCFS office, but they so far don't have any cases that are coming to a close soon
  - Suzi Kollmann (SDA 14 – Metro East) explained that Children's Home and Aid also has a contract to intact family case work in the area as well, and after talking with the director of that program:
    - There is some confusion about whether they need to be receiving child care while intact case is open (through DCFS) in order to be eligible for CCAP following the case closure
      - Paula explained that is not actually written in the law, but it may be that it is being implemented that way
      - A family receiving protective day care while their case is open should be able to keep the same provider once the case closes without any interruption – it would just be transfer in which agency is paying for that care

- If the family did not receive protective day care, they may not be able to get CCAP after their case closes unless they are separately eligible
  - Paula explained that DCFS used to be very restrictive and subjective in allowing protective day care for families, and only referred families in specific circumstance where the parent or guardian had to go to an appointment related to their intact case
- Chris Tokarski (SDA 6 – Cook County) explained that they haven't received very many intact family transfer cases yet (about 10 to date)
  - One of the main issues so far has been incomplete or incorrect referral forms, which can prevent the CCR&R liaison from know when the actual payment transition should take place
  - Additionally, it seems that many of the DCFS contract agencies are still unclear about how the process works
- Maria pointed out that more attention needs to be directed to training providers on how to deal with this population of children who have been traumatized in many circumstances
  - Stephen Vick further pointed out that funding needs to be built in to provide the training and resources that providers need to care for these children who have experienced trauma because right now nonprofit providers are doing the best they can to fundraise and blend funding streams to provide trauma-informed services but more needs to be done to fill the gap
- Marquinta explained that CCR&Rs are uniquely positioned to provide trainings to providers -
  - One example is that IAFC was a part of a pilot, intact families were referred immediately once their case was opened to identify a child care program. This pilot hasn't worked great so far because IAFC has not been in contact with the families directly but instead through DCFS and DHS as middlemen. But this could be a potential blueprint for successful process to connect intact families to quality providers
  - CCR&Rs also train providers and could provide specific trainings geared to providers who will be receiving referrals of children from intact family cases
- Maria suggested idea of an expedited enrollment into CCAP for intact families with layered on funding for trauma informed care training and mental health consultants for receiving child care provider
  - Paula agreed with the idea of putting intact families right away into CCAP
  - Carie also pointed out that this is an opportunity to also align range of DCFS supports and services for children ages 0-5 (e.g. Erickson DCFS project for mental

health supports for infants and toddlers, school readiness team for 3-5 year olds, and then specific contracts like protective day care)

- Other idea is to provide training to intact family case workers for what to look for in child care programs to meet the needs of these families
- Lannon pointed out that looking at the process is important too in addition to the policy recommendations; it is important to include members of the community in the policymaking process
- **Next steps:**
  - Meet with representatives of DHS and DCFS to discuss low-hanging fruit of improving logistical issues of transferring cases in the short term
  - In the longer-term, AFS should take a look at Chapin Hall report audit of DCFS, outline how to tie our recommendation to help DCFS improve and succeed
    - Matt and Children's Home and Aid will draft a document with recommendations for DCFS
  - Director level conversation to talk about long-term recommendations with DCFS and DHS

#### **FY 2020 Workplan Planning Discussion**

- FEIS
  - Be proactive about inclusion of a broad representation with a racial equity
  - Ensure mutual accountability in decision-making (everyone has a voice)
  - Create a strategy for recruitment, onboarding succession planning and term limits with a racial equity lens
- All Families Served
  - Assure that interventions...include strategies for cultural reflection
  - Becoming more explicit about racial equity goals within AFS workplan when most of tasks were implicitly tied to this goal

#### **State Agency/Policy Updates**

- HB2237 – Children's Saving Account bill approved out of committee

#### **General Announcements**

- Next Meeting: September 18<sup>th</sup>, 10am - 1pm